

95 CENTS

WITH

Sgt. Mike

IN VIETNAM



By Michael T. Hodgson

Army Times Publishing Company

I bought this book in 1972,
when I was stationed at
Camp Hansen, Okinawa.

It brought many smiles to
my face then and still
continues to make me smile and
think about my days in the
Marine Corps. There are many
subtle and not so subtle
references to social, political
and military issues.

In short, the humor in this
book captures the war in
Vietnam as seen through
the eyes of a Marine, not a
politician. There is still a
great deal of relevant humor
to be found here.

Bronson Gardner
March 16, 2020

Note: a few extra Sgt. Mike cartoons
are included. The one about
pollution was so good, that I had to
photograph it, in whatever publication
I discovered it in.

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Introduction

Like most of the good ones (Bill Mauldin, George Baker), Mike Hodgson got the material for his art where the action was. For 12 months in Vietnam, in rain and mud, he created characters in cartoon form. Now "Sledge", "Lieutenant Frisby" and especially "Sgt. Mike" himself are this war's successors to "Willie and Joe" and "The Sad Sack."

Hodgson's cartooning career grew out of the zany sketches he began sending home from Vietnam illustrating how he was "making it" in the war. These got printed in the local papers and eventually (in 1966) led to syndication of his "Sgt. Mike" panel in about 60 outlets, including Army, Navy and Air Force Times, the Saigon Press, Okinawa Morning Star and San Francisco Examiner.

Helped by the GI Bill, the former Marine Corps sergeant and logistics specialist now attends Rio Hondo College at Whittier, Calif. (He was born in

Modesto not quite 25 years ago and before his service used to call Fair Oaks home.) He's been elected to the Student Body Senate and is president of the school's veterans' club. Between studies, he works as a group supervisor with the California Youth Authority, with which his father, Gerald, has long been associated.

Judging by the gallows humor so often present in the daily, black-and-white panels he draws, one might not readily suppose that Hodgson is also a sensitive artist in oils. But he has many unfulfilled orders for paintings, most of them deriving from the hot, dry, open country east of Los Angeles. At a recent showing, his "Gold Dredger"—metallic and full of light—won first prize and best of show over 400 paintings in the Los Angeles area.

To keep even busier, Hodgson got married just this June.

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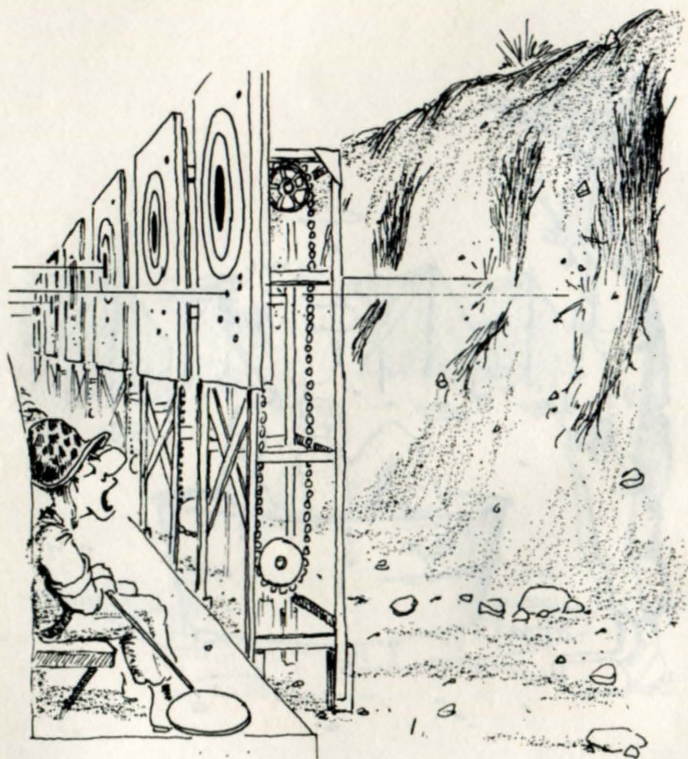
Second Printing: *December, 1971*

Printed in the United States of America

Army Times Publishing Co; 475 School St. SW,
Washington, D.C. 20024



"I don't know why, Sledge, but you in that tub hits me as a strikin' example of man survivin' out of his natural habitat."



"...Kinda makes me wonder how we won every war
we wuz in."



"This the one that needs new brakes?"



"...Sure, I got a gripe about goin' into Cambodia—I wanna know why we didn't go in sooner."



"I keep askin' myself how I got assigned to this outfit an' I keep comin' back to the same answer—You deserve the very best."



"No, I'm not interested in that headline! Now, get outta here and get that foxhole of yours swept out!"



"Good news, Sledge—The cap'n agreed you ain't a total loss. He said if worse came to worse we could always use ya as a bad example."



"I'll say one thing—That ol' Vietnamese rain god don't mess with the Sarge."



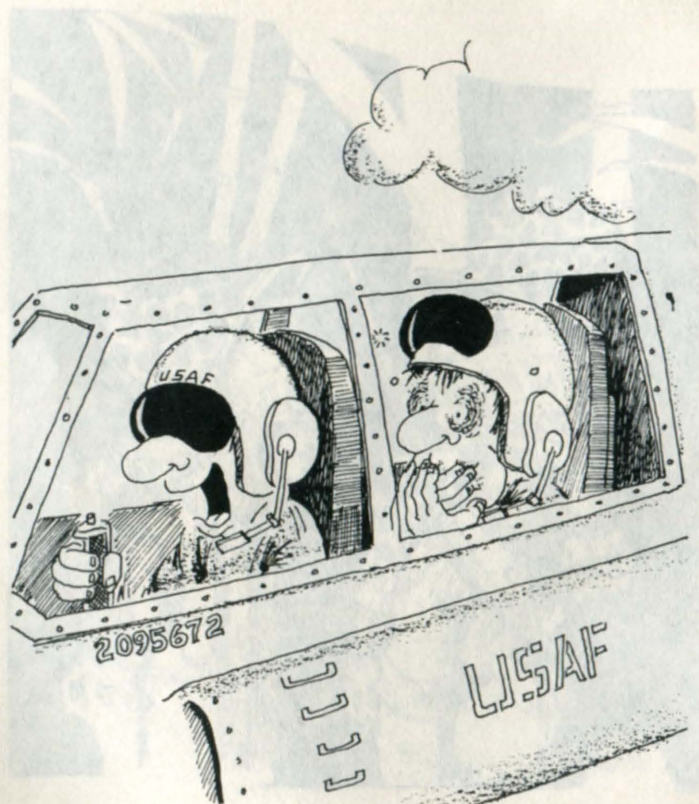
"...Sure, I believe in bein' careful, Sledge, but we're only stoppin' for a 10-minute break."



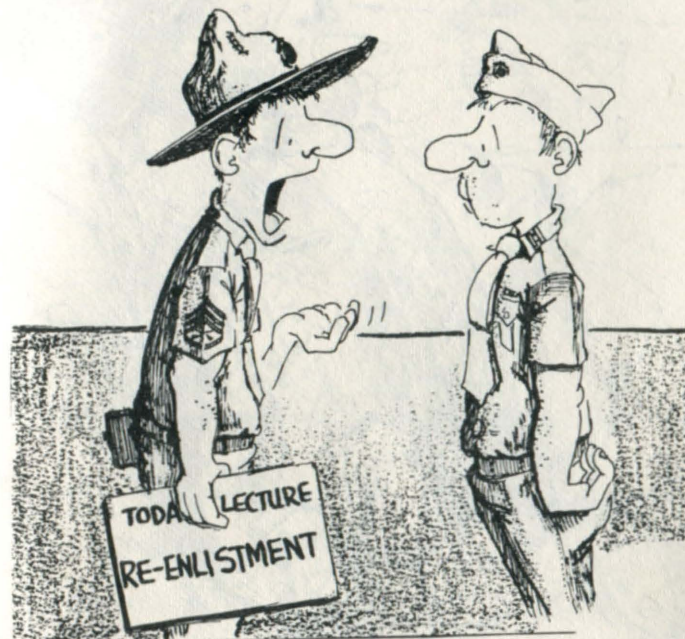
"...That sign? Oh, I don't know—probably 'No Smokin' or somethin'."



"One nice thing about not headin' anywhere in p'tic'lar—ya can't get lost."



"How was that for a loop-de-loop?"



"...And then they all laughed."



"Dear Mom—You think you got air pollution problems in the States!"



"Fer some reason, Sledge, you make me feel guilty every time I tell someone th' Marine Corps is highly selective!"



"I tol'ja — Go light on th' salt!"



"This must be some kinda record — Th' last two days
I fought in two different wars."



"This kinda reminds me of when I wuz a kid back on th' farm — Did you ever slop hogs when you wuz a kid?"



"One more word from my ol' man about how rough it wuz in th' big WW-2 an' he gets it right in th' chops!"



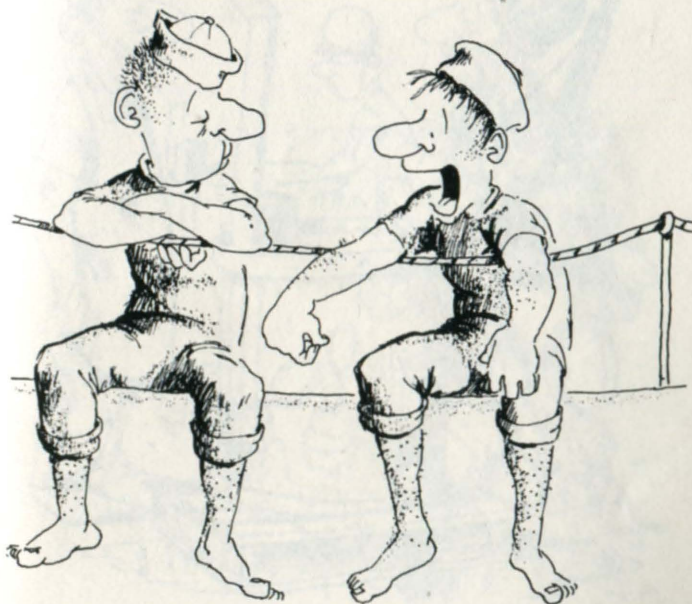
"I'm sending you to Japan for a week, Sledge — I figure I'm due for a little R&R."



"Look, I don't mind carryin' ya, but non-swimmer or not, one more 'Mama' outta you an' down—you-go!"



"Careful what you say about his soup..."



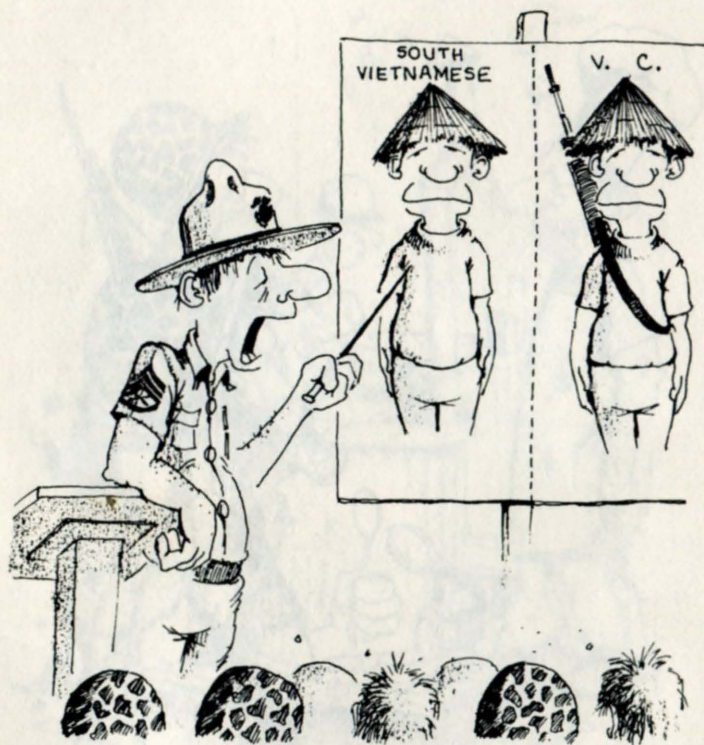
"...One thing I like about th' Coast Guard—If anything happens ya can wade t' shore."



"May I say th' meal wuz indescribable..."



"...Rain fallin' into my C-rats—A perfect example of nature pollutin' garbage."



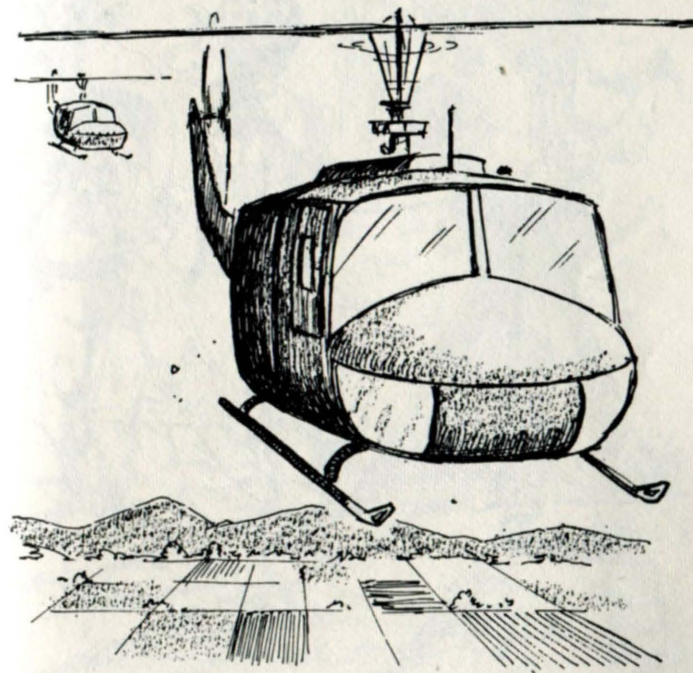
"Now, as you can clearly see, contrary to what you've heard, th' VC is clearly distinguishable from his Vietnamese counterpart in th' south."



"In a word—No."



"Lay low?! We're layin' so low now we gotta look up t' see down!"



"Whaddya mean head fer Cuba?"



"Sledge, you gotta get over this nonsense about seein' tigers right here in camp."



"...Well, look on th' bright side— At least we proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that th' thing won't fly upside down."



"I had no idea these new lieutenants got so upset if ya call yer weapon a gun instead of a rifle!"



"Sledge, I'm beginnin' t' think you're a luxury we can't afford."



"...Oh, some kind of man-eatin' fish—Why?"



"So naturally when th' recruiter tol' me about th' tropical pools an' th' swayin' palm trees..."



"I always look forward t' these lulls around Thanksgiving time."



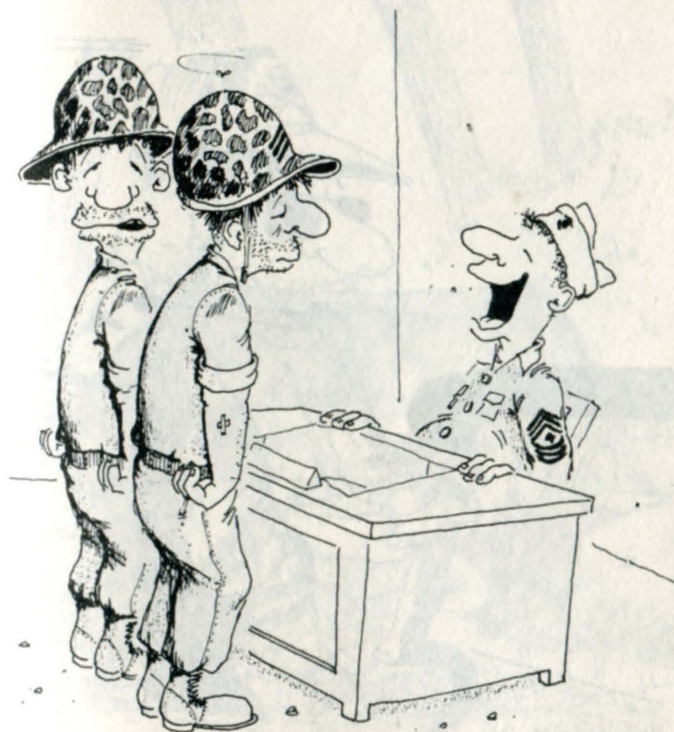
"If ya wanna get right down to it—This chow an' malaria have quite a bit in common— Build up an immunity or it'll get ya in the end."



"My specialty. I call it Sweatband ala Lizard Lips."



"...Just th' same, I still say there's such a thing as an overly dedicated combat artist!"



"Well, so much for th' day off."



"Oh, swell. I'm at 5000 feet, outta gas, an' NOW ya tell me th' thing won't glide!"



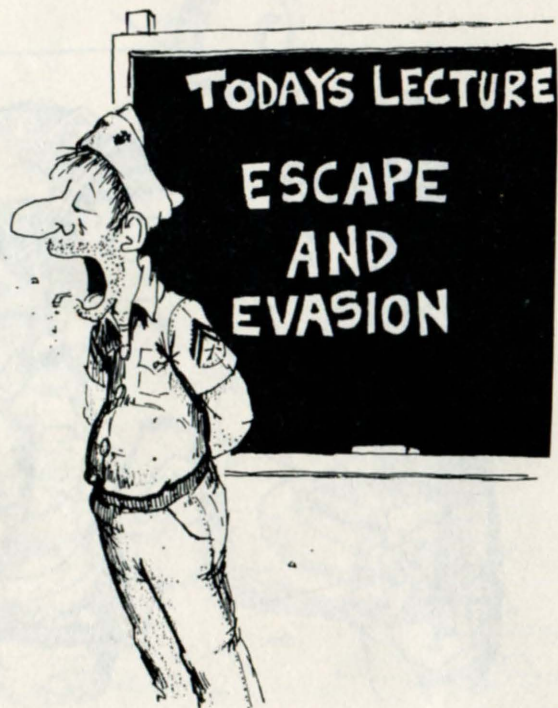
"I've decided there are two kinds of people in this world, Sledge—You an' everybody else."



"Well, may I suggest we re-submit th' 'over-th'-top' idea for further critical consideration?"



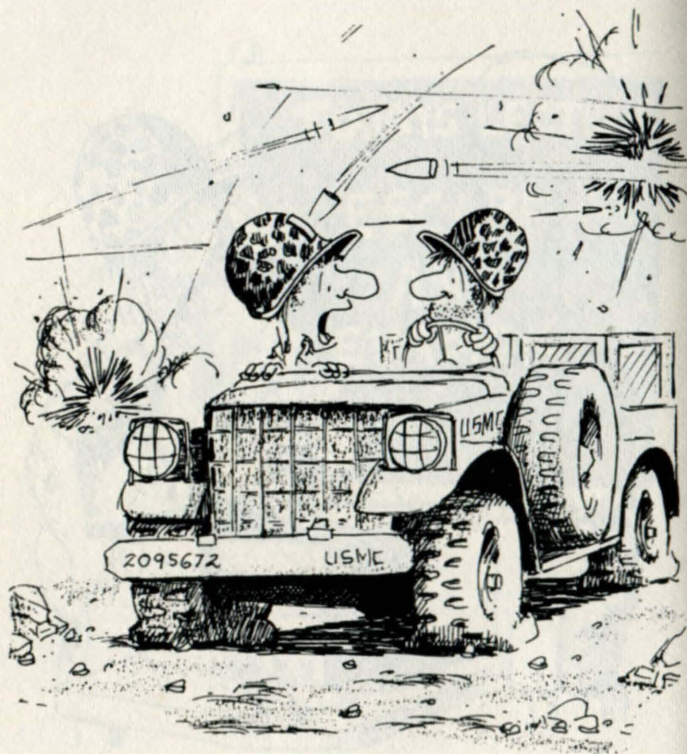
"What all do I like about this outfit? ...Well...uh ...let's see...uh... Could you repeat th' question, please?"



"Sorry, men, but due t'circumstances beyond our control, we were unable to locate today's lecturer."



"If I pull through this war, I'd best not see you steppin' up t' take any credit."



"Sergeant, I am a lieutenant. Now I ORDER you to get us out of here!"



"Whaddya mean, 'deeper'? If I dig this thing any deeper we'll be usin' it for a shortcut back to th' States!"



"Cheer up, Traxler. That probably won't be th' last time some Marine called ya an anchor clanker."



"Okay, so you said I should run when you yell. You didn't say which way."



"Hey, Sledge, this here's Cpl. Wilkerson all th' way from th' Pentagon. They wanta use you for th' 'Before' on a 'Before an' After' recruiting poster."



"Good meal, Guffy. I guess you could sorta call this a record-breakin' day fer you guys."



"Ya understand, as a non-swimmer th' rain bothers me some."



"All of a sudden our 'no win' policy over here sounds like a bunch of hog slop!"



"Remember, Sledge—we gotta keep a sharp eye out for them snare traps."



"I'd venture t' say somebody's Playboy magazine arrived."



"An' ya say that stupid ol' gun just won't hit a darn thing ya aim it at?"



"Don't tell me, let me guess— You're th' guy who wuz due t' rotate back t' th' world prior to us losin' your orders."



"Ya know, Sarge, I always feel more secure with you durin' these heavy rains."



"Heh-heh, little do those people realize that they are dealin' with a student of eight hours of hand t' hand combat."



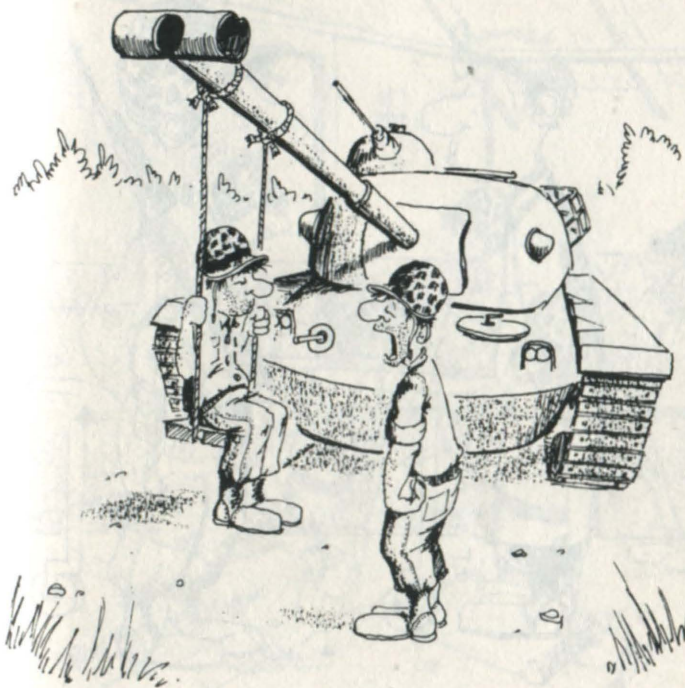
"He says he just don't feel much like a li'l' green amphibious monster today."



"...One more chorus of 'April Showers' outta you an' you can hang it up!"



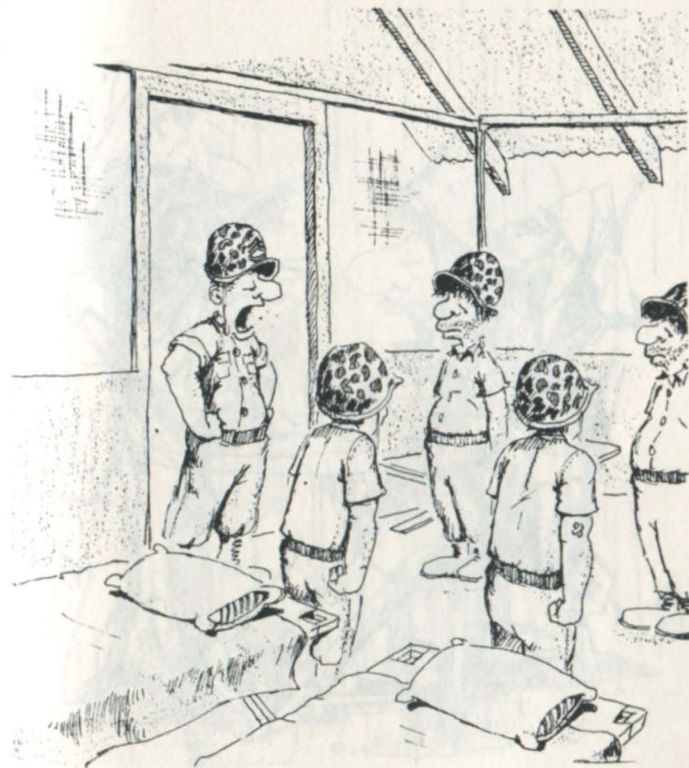
"...I understand Kemper's buckin' fer corporal."



"Sledge, you gotta take this war a little more seriously..."



"Never mind where I'm hit, just gimme a band-aid!"



"I'm gettin' sick an' tired of this 'Look what th' cat drug in' jazz every time I walk in!"



"You remember one thing, buster— I'll out-drink you any day of th' week an' sun on twicedays."



"One more word outta you about how valuable rain is as a natural resource an' you get it right in th' chops!"



"...Do I need reinforcements! Does a fish need water?"



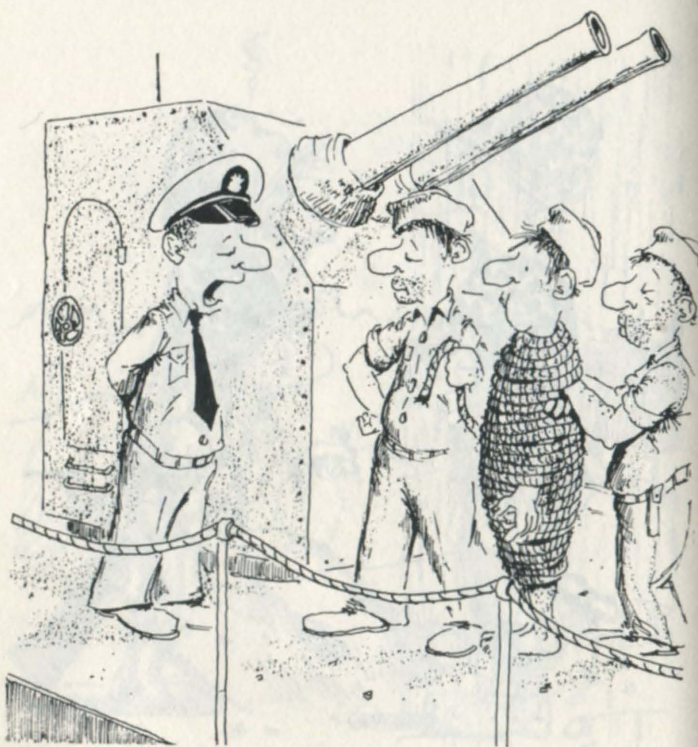
"Remember, for maximum attention it's hard t' beat a good big mistake."



"...But are you really sure it wuz heavy artillery?"



"Ya know, Sledge, I'm beginnin' t' see what they're talkin' about when they say you have some characteristics of a born loser."



"...While I appreciate your enthusiasm, men, as a rule we usually don't keelhaul any more—even if he did refer to the ship as a boat."



"Sledge, me an' th' boys have reached a decision regardin' you."



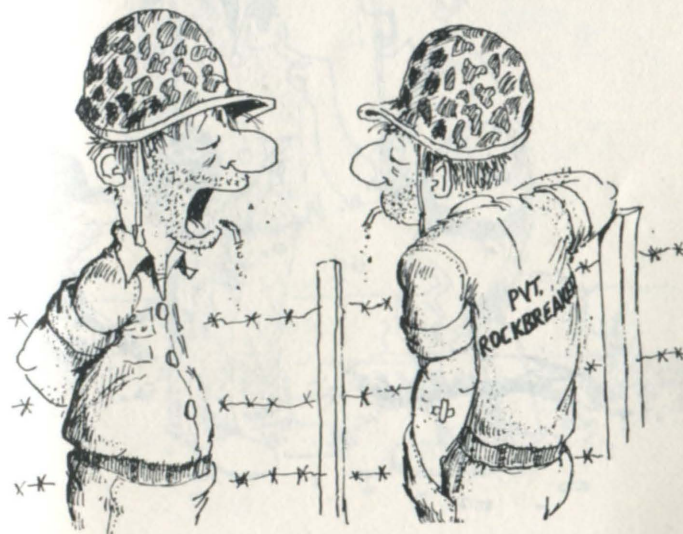
"Troop withdrawals? Well, that would depend on whether they withdraw him or me?"



"I don't mind tellin' ya, Beecher—you, as high shooter in this outfit, make me sick!"



"We've gotta get Sgt. Rathman in a position where he's not responsible for anything. I figure we can either bust him to private or promote him to second lieutenant."



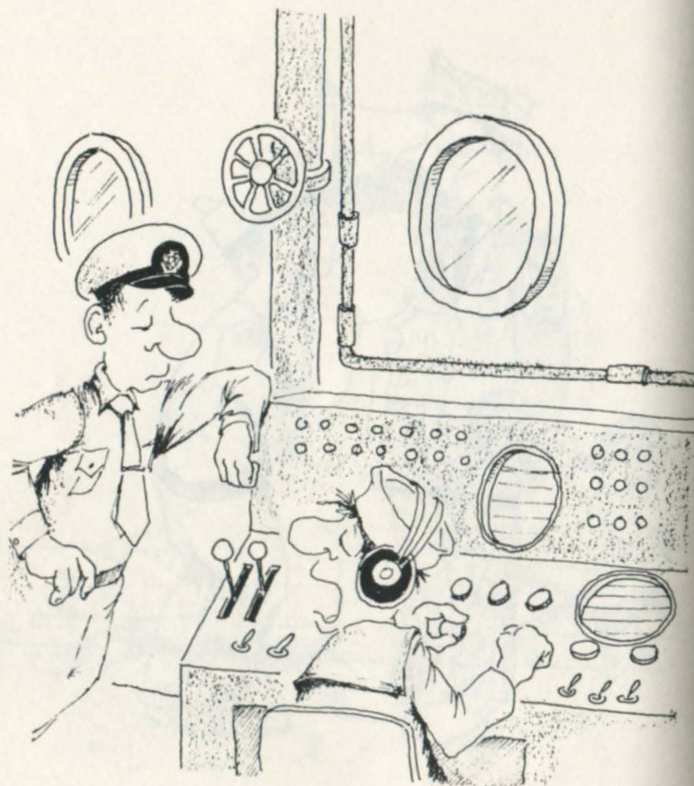
"Initially, you can probably expect more than your share of trouble with Sgt. Rock."



"I don't really give a hoot an' a half how the SDS will react to it! Now get up there and take that skuzzy thing down!"



"...No kiddin'—An' what's that yellow one for? Th' run-in ya had with th' marines in that bar the other night?"



"It's Radio Hanoi. We've just been sunk."



"Well, Lieutenant, as our new mess officer you're bound to look good—that mess can't go any place but up."



"Why is it when demonstrators criticize, it's free speech, but when the Vice President criticizes, it's suppression?"



"Now, Sledge, don't misunderstand me—I appreciate your enthusiasm for this camouflage exercise."



"Actually, if it wasn't for ships, th' Navy would be a fairly decent outfit..."



"Can't ya be court-martialed for inflictin' bodily harm on yerself?"



"Why don't just one of us keep him covered? Image, ya know..."



"Actually, why I'm fightin' over here is quite cut an' dried—I'm tryin' t' stay alive."



"I don't know if I'd call it dirty—Skuzzy might be more accurate terminology."



"Much more of this an' I'll be on a first-name basis
with every sand flea south of th' DMZ."



"Hey, Sledge, after 13 months ya finally got a lett—"



"...It's—it's—Well, it's just not military!"



"When the boys said you were numb, I don't think they were referring to your sense of touch."



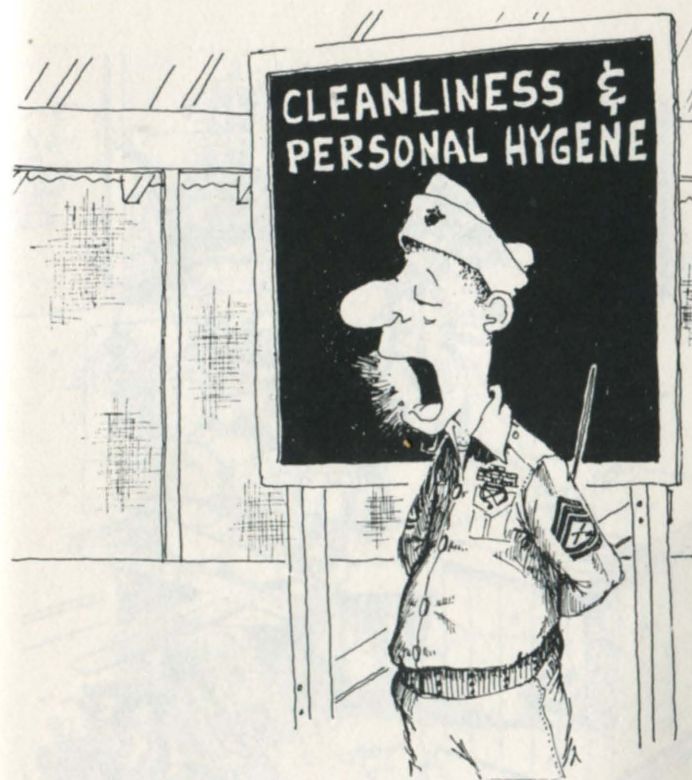
"Washington wants troop withdrawals. Now, get half your men outta here an' never mind the flimsy excuses!"



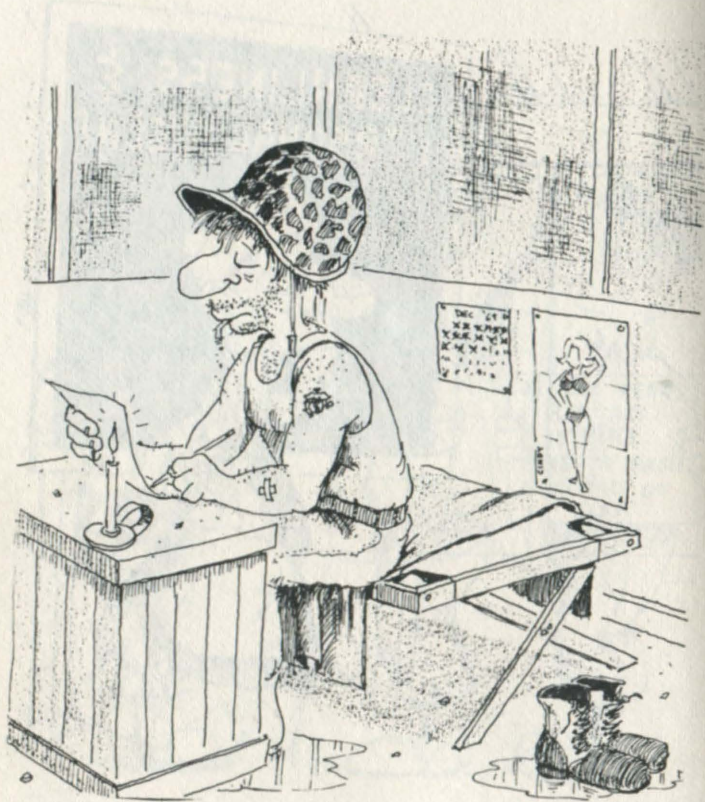
"Didja know that th' corps wuz started in a bar? Which makes sense—somebody had t' be drunk t' get up an' say let's start a Marine Corps."



"You're kiddin'..."



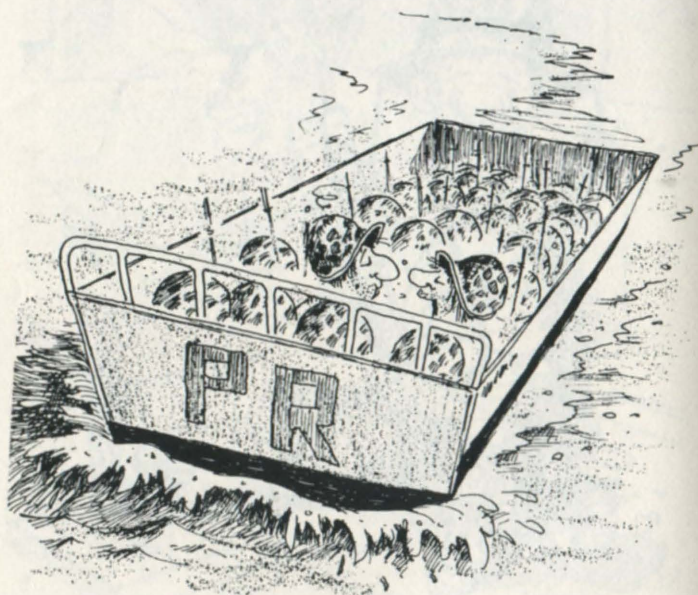
"For th' sweet love a' humanity, will one of you please dedicate yourself t' seein' that Pvt. Sledge doesn't fall asleep durin' this particular lecture?"



"Dear Mom—I ain't sayin' it rains hard over here, but when ya hafta jump in th' river t' dry off..."



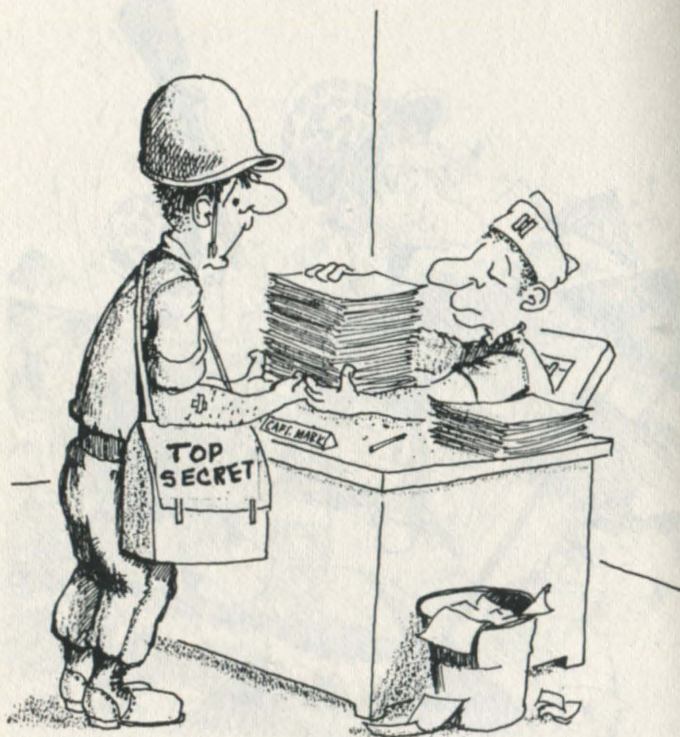
"Aside from it bein' a unilateral ceasefire, I have nothin' against a unilateral ceasefire."



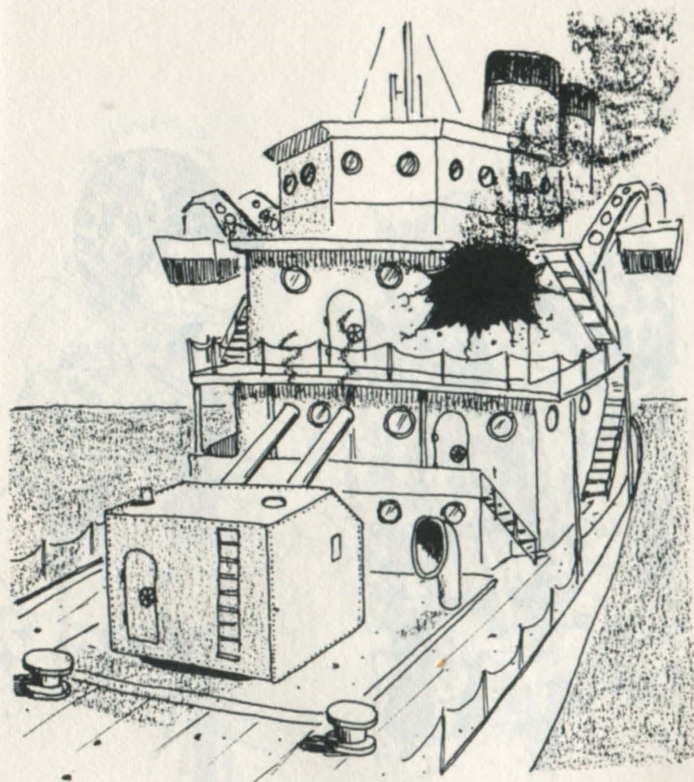
"Look at th' bright side. Once we hit th' jungle, that green around th' gills'll make wonderful camouflage."



"Hey, boy! At least we don't hafta complain about not bein' able t' find 'em!"



"Whaddya mean eat 'em if I'm captured!"



"Say, Paxton, you sure that last shot wuz s'posed t' be 90 degrees right 'stead of 90 degrees left?"



"OK, now, when we engage th' enemy I want you t' pretend they're your draft board th' day they revoked your '2-S' deferments."



"Don't get me wrong, Sledge, it's not that th' boys won't appreciate your valentines..."



"...November already?"



"Now where the devil did that point man go?"



"It's a real vicious circle—Th' more they catch me sleepin' on guard, th' more guard I get—th' more guard I get, the' more I sleep on guard..."



"Just th' same, I think even optimism should have it's limits..."



"I hear they're gonna hold off sendin' you back to th' States, what with th' pollution problem what it is."



" 'Course he's teachin' it—Wha'ja think?"



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what others
have said
about

Sgt. Mike



" . . . It is a rare quality indeed to be able to find and convey humor in the midst of a situation which is not conducive to lightness. Because your talent lies not only in your hand, but also comes from the heart, 'Sgt. Mike' has great insight and appeal . . . perhaps 'the pen will prove to be mightier than the sword' in presenting a picture of the Viet Nam conflict and of the fine men who serve there."

—Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson

"I want you to know that I admire your keen sense of humor and your obvious ability to display it. All too few of us have such talent. People like you help others find the humor in life—sometimes under the most adverse conditions when help really is needed . . ."

—Gen. L. F. Chapman Jr., USMC

"Mike is unique. Not many people find anything funny about the Vietnam situation. His subject is an unpopular one and, in many cases, an unaccepted one. Yet his handling of guerrilla war tactics, the punji pits, grimy foxholes, the 'close ones', are causing a tidal wave of laughter around this war-torn sphere. . ."

—Youth in Action Magazine

"Fighting men of his company are Mike's strongest fans. They tell him their gripes—enlisted men always have plenty—and he depicts them. They love what he does."

—Editor & Publisher

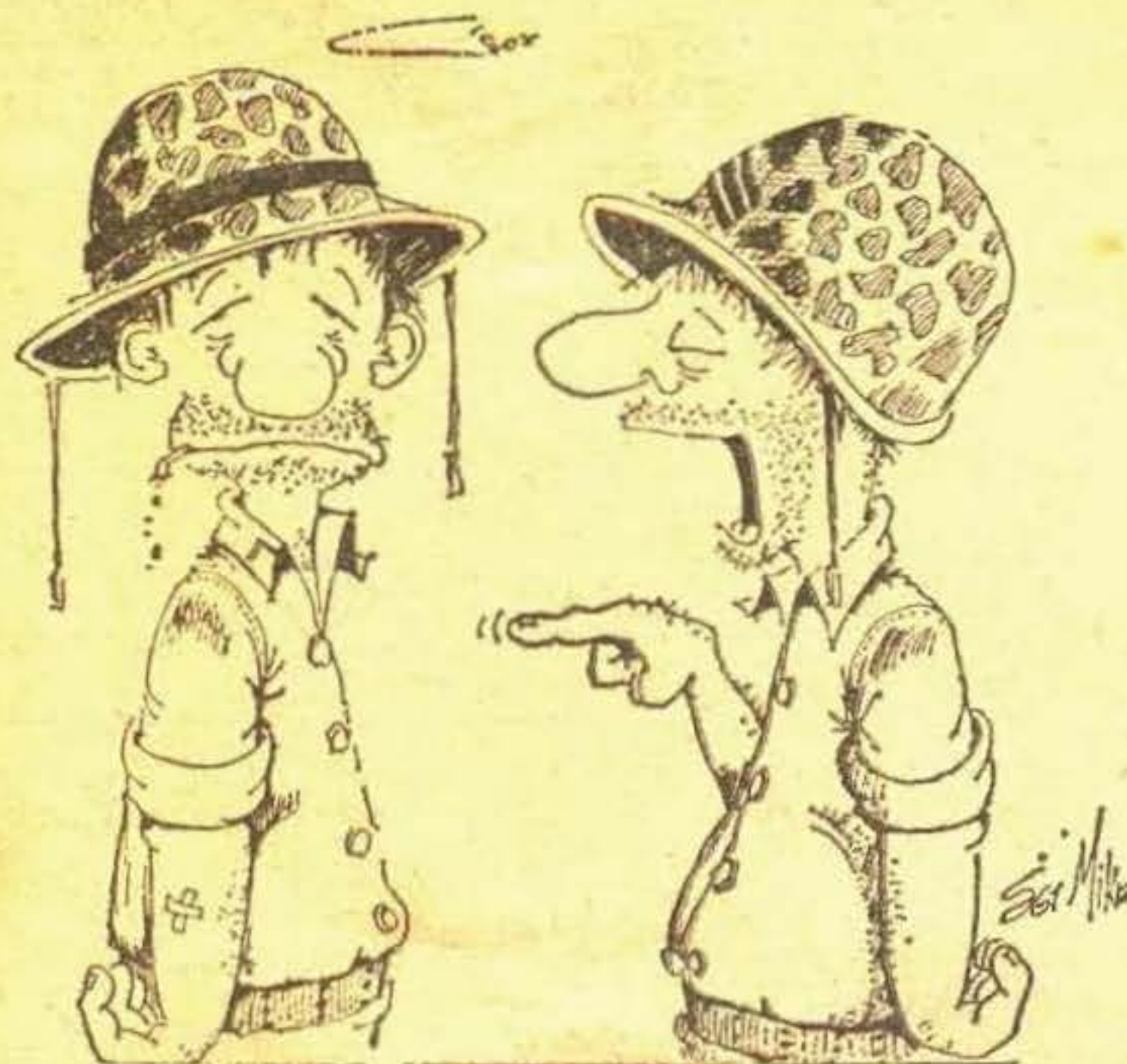


With Sgt. Mike



"Well, I'm home!"

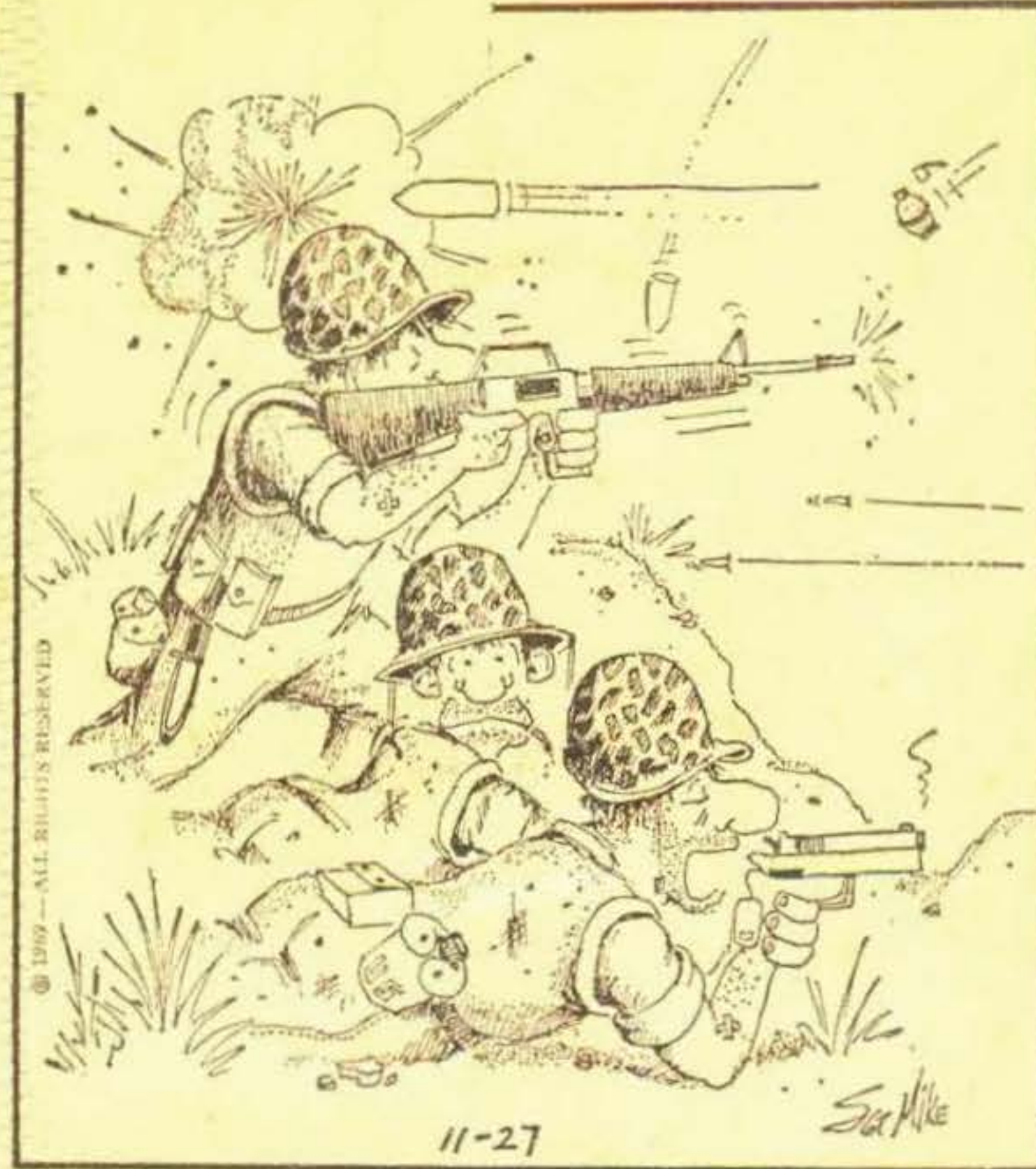
With Sgt. Mike



"... an' you say yer reputation ain't spreadin'!? How's come guys say they 'pulled a Sledge' every time they goof?"

SGT. MIKE

By Hodgson



"I ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD T' THESE LULLS AROUND THANKSGIVIN' TIME."

With Sgt. Mike



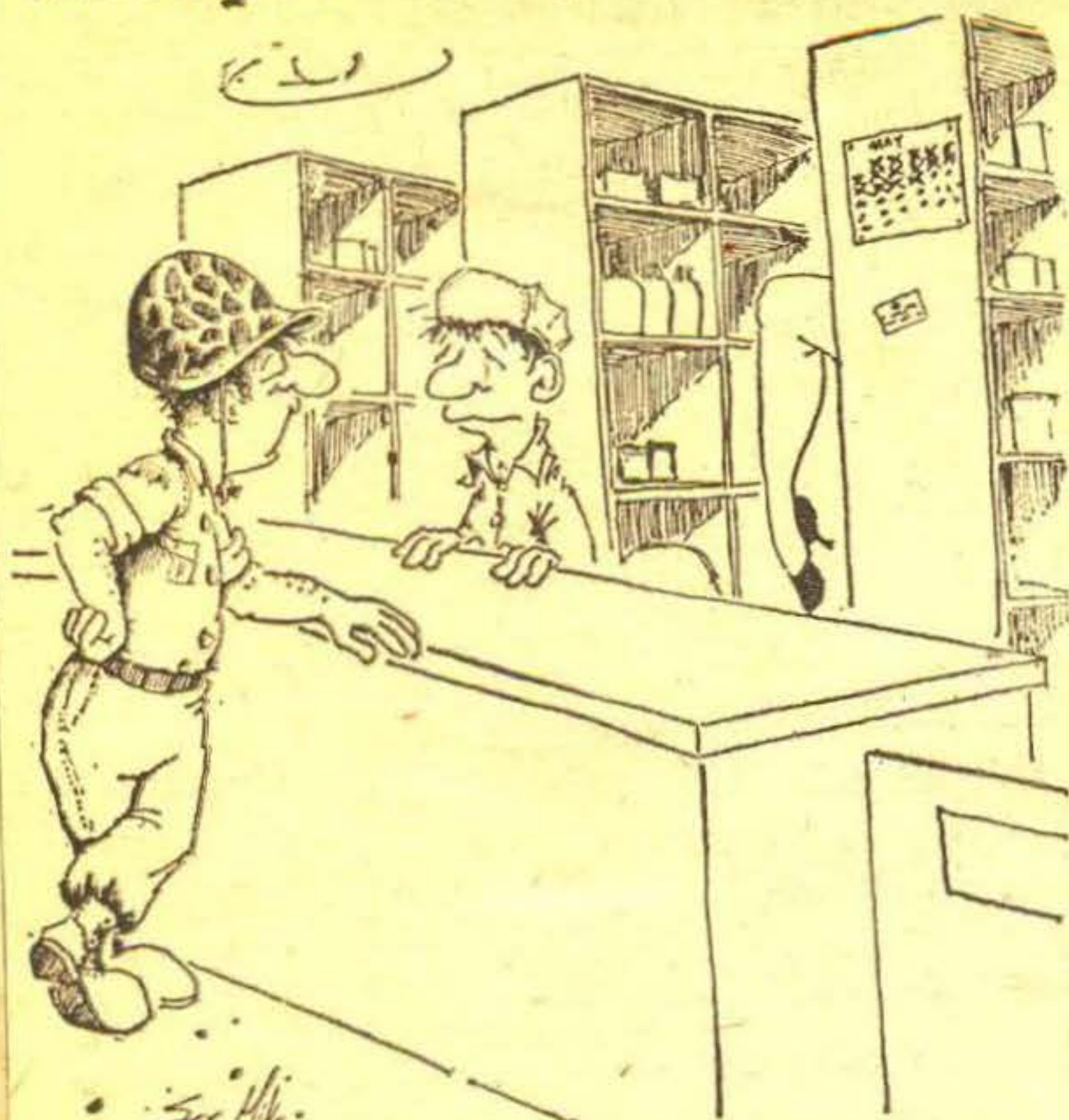
"... Now what's this I hear about the men harassin' you about your name, Sgt. Tomain?"

With Sgt. Mike



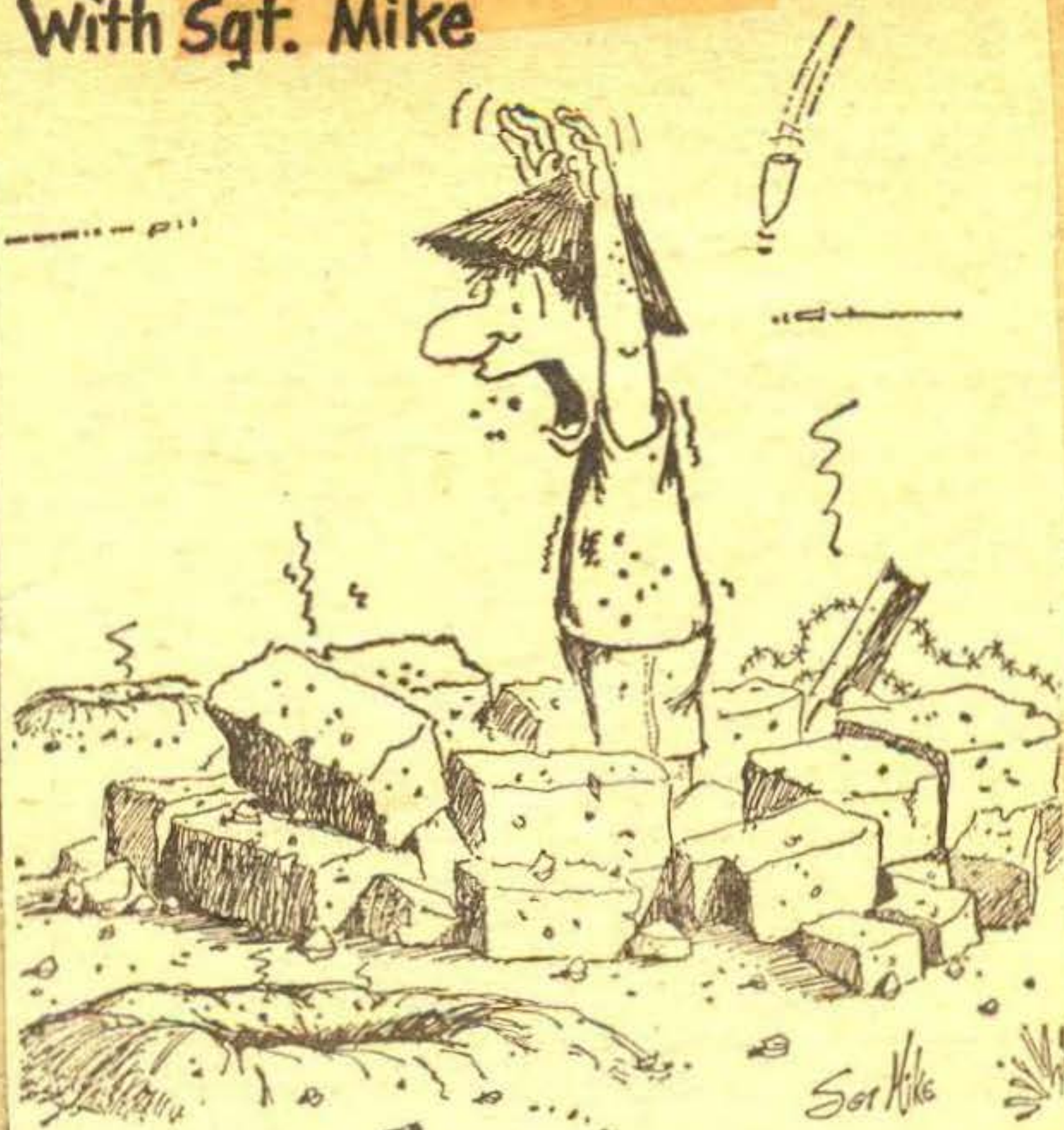
"Say, ya know them B-52's pack quite a jolt..."

With Sgt. Mike



"Rumor has it that you run a pretty groovy company supply."

With Sgt. Mike



"I surrender! I surrender—an' I promise not t' laugh at th' latest U.S. concessions!"

With Sgt. Mike



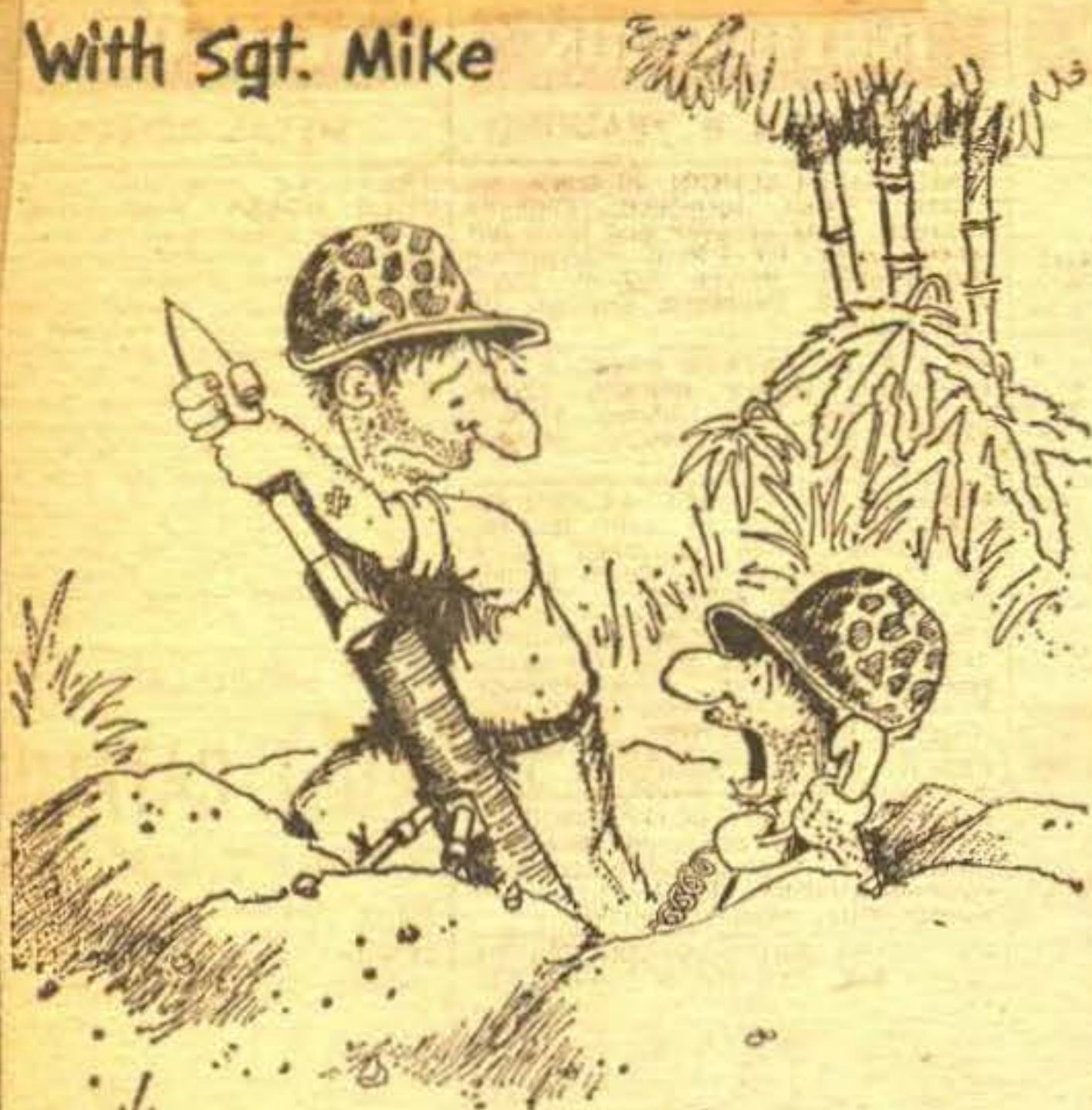
"Hey Huong—remember when I said 'nonsense' to you being a born loser? . . . I take it back."

With Sgt. Mike



"Who you callin' 'a shinin' example o' th' fact that jungle rot exists in th' world today'!!?"

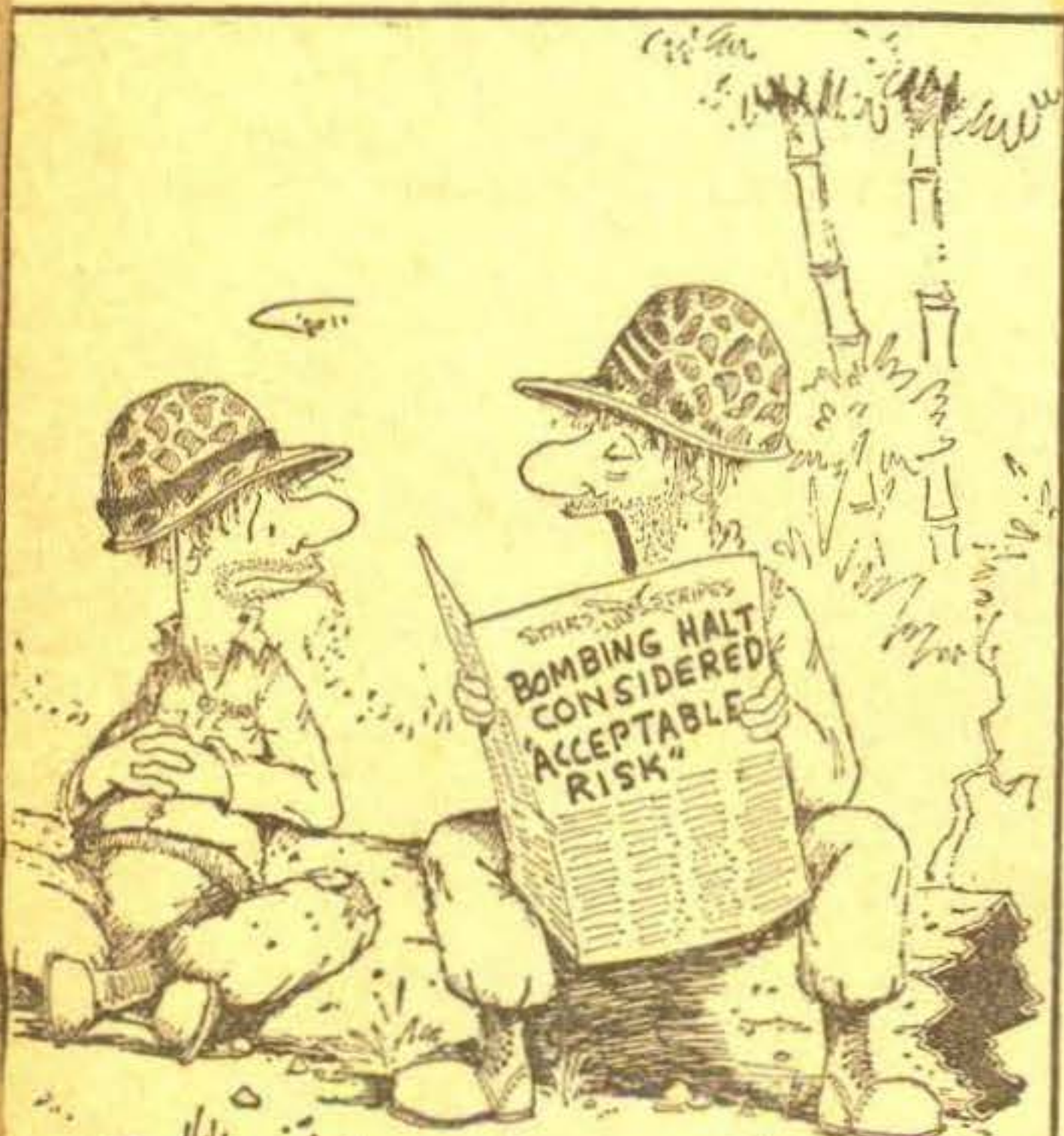
With Sgt. Mike



"Th' C.O. wants t' see you as soon as he gets through pickin' the shrapnel outa his pants!!"

SGT. MIKE

By Hodgson



"MAN, I BEEN CALLED SOME RAUNCHY NAMES B'FORE, BUT AN 'ACCEPTABLE RISK'!!?"

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Publishers-Hall Syndicate

SGT. MIKE

By Hodgson



"ALL BLASTED YEAR LONG I WUZ HOPIN' AGAINST HOPE THAT YOU'D 'AVE SLEDGE OFF THAI MACHINE GUN BY NOW!"

With Sgt. Mike



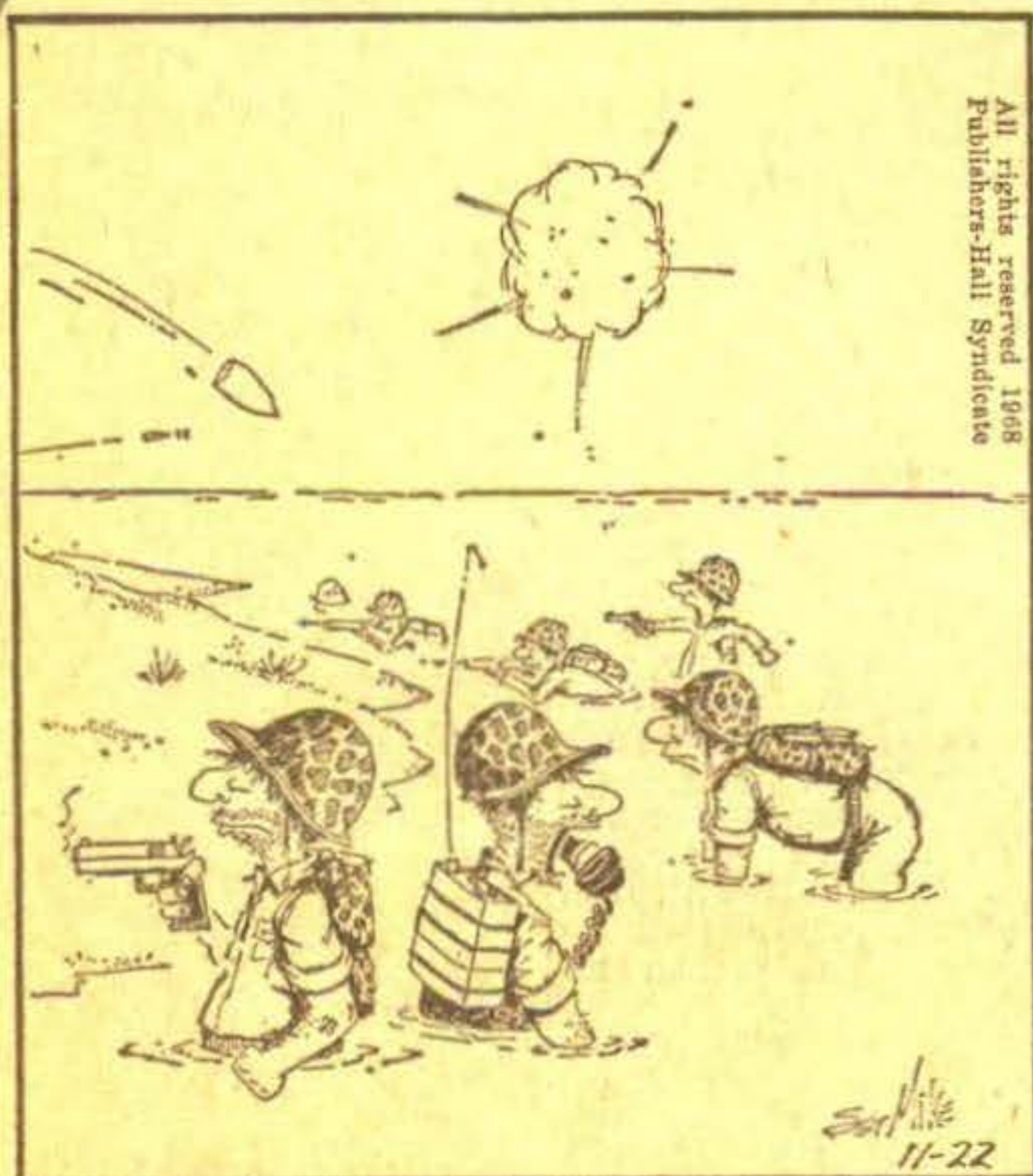
"So you've never seen a case o' th' creepin' crud—hey, Sledge, get over here!"



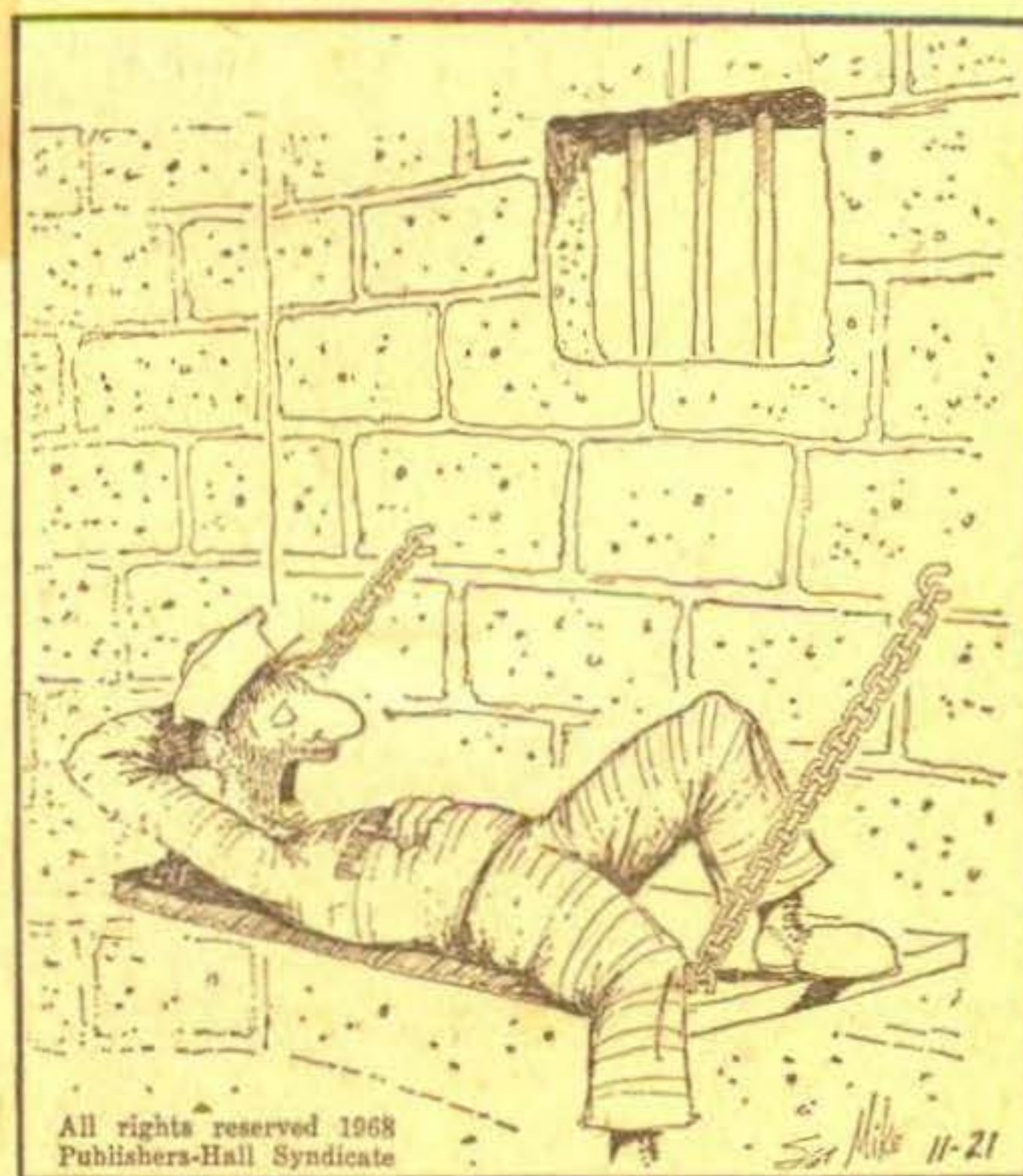
"GAMBLE ON A BOMBIN' HALT,
GAMBLE ON A BOMBIN' HALT—
ALL OF A SUDDEN I FEEL LIKE
A POKER CHIP."



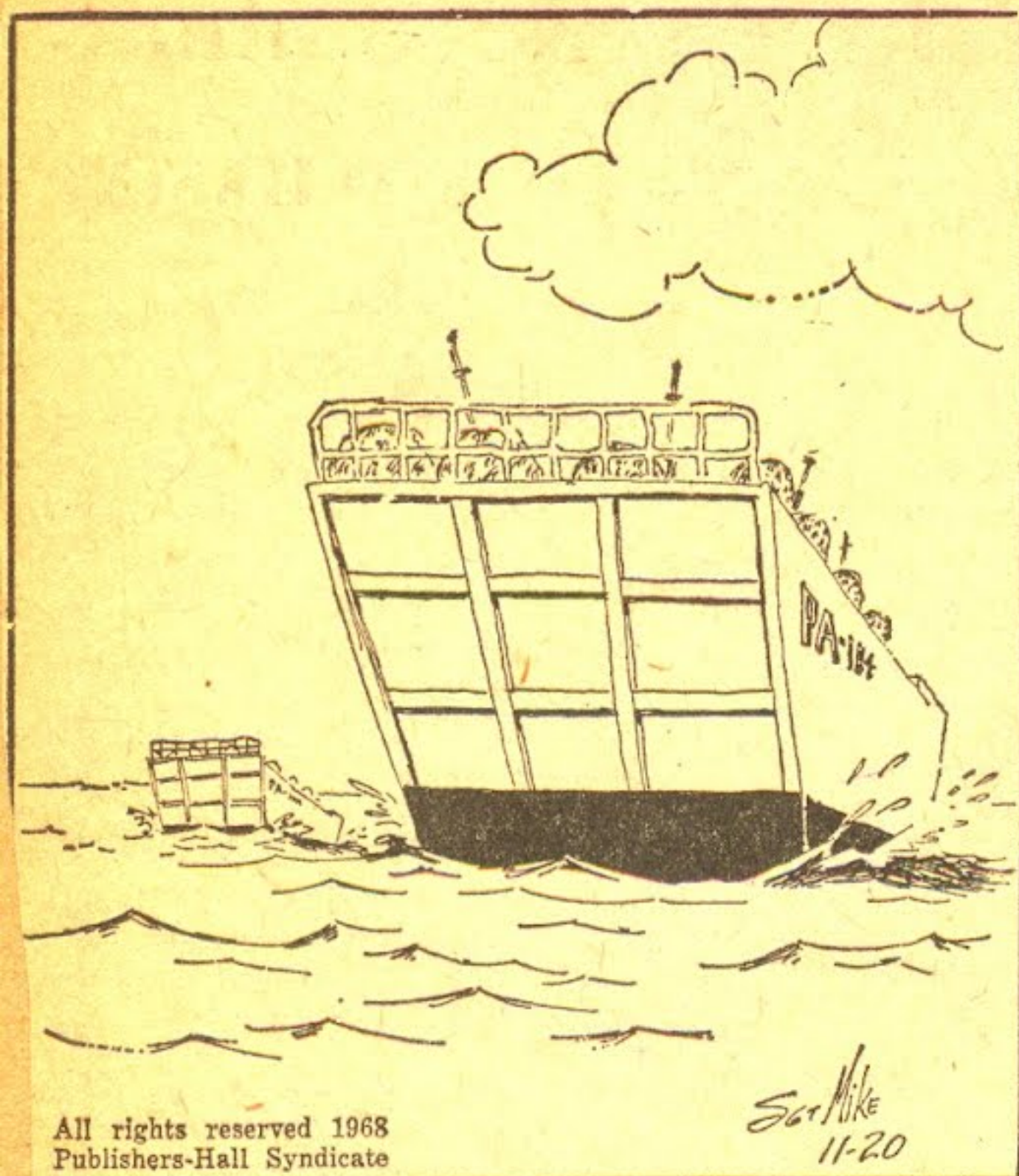
"WHAT TRAP? I SAY THIS CALLS
FER A LI'L RECONNAISSANCE ON
OUR PART!"



"WELL, SIR—WE HAD TH' BEACH-
HEAD, BUT THEN TH' DAD-BURN
TIDE CAME IN!"



"HOLY SMOKE... IF TH' NAVY GAVE
TIME 'N' A HALF FER OVERTIME..."



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Sgt Mike
11-20

"WHADDYA MEAN YA DON'T FEEL TOO GOOD, SLEDGE??... MAKE A HOLE EVERYBODY!!"



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Sgt Mike
12-23

"MAN, WHAT JAZZY CAMOUFLAGE — I THOUGHT YOU WUZ A FIRE TRUCK!!"



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Sgt Mike
12-24

"GREAT SCOTT! SOMEBODY GET SLEDGE AWAY FROM THEM ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS!!"



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Sgt Mike

12-6

"YESTERDAY I GOT A BOX O' BLACK CHALK IN TH' MAIL... IT'S COMFORTING T'KNOW PEOPLE ARE THINKIN' 'BOUT YA."

With Sgt. Mike



"Pollution everywhere—water, air, Sledge's brain . .

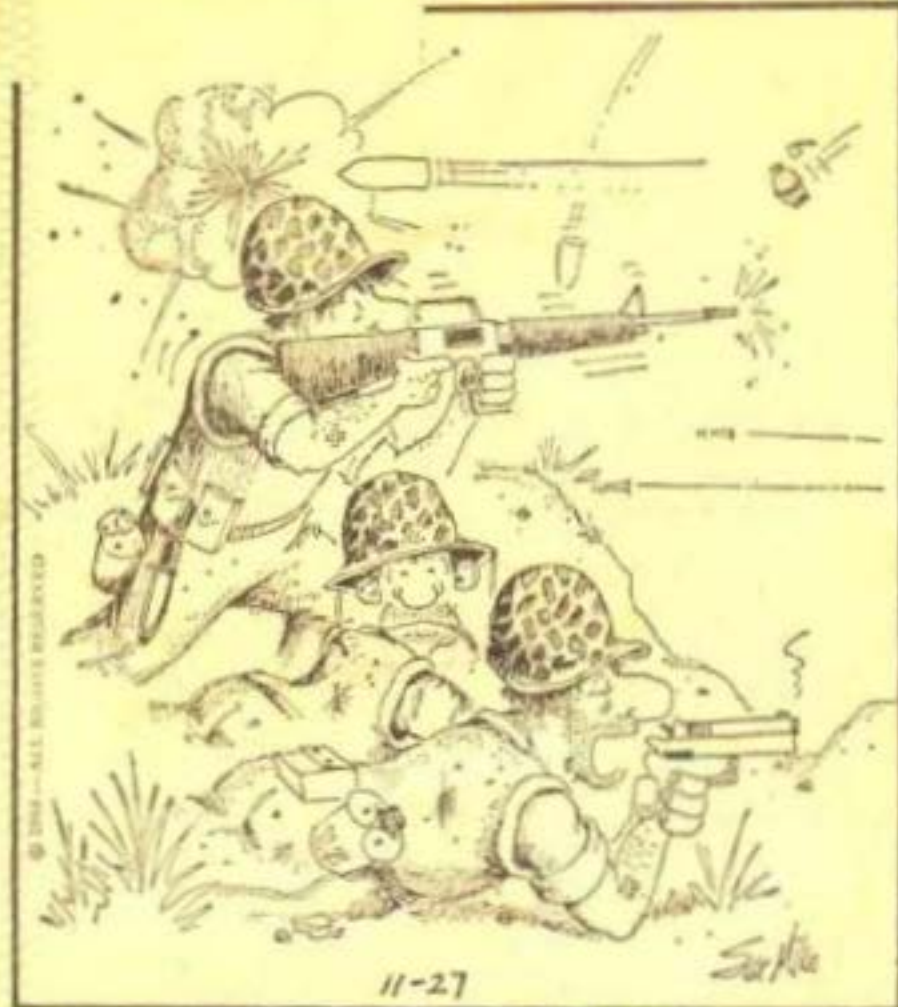
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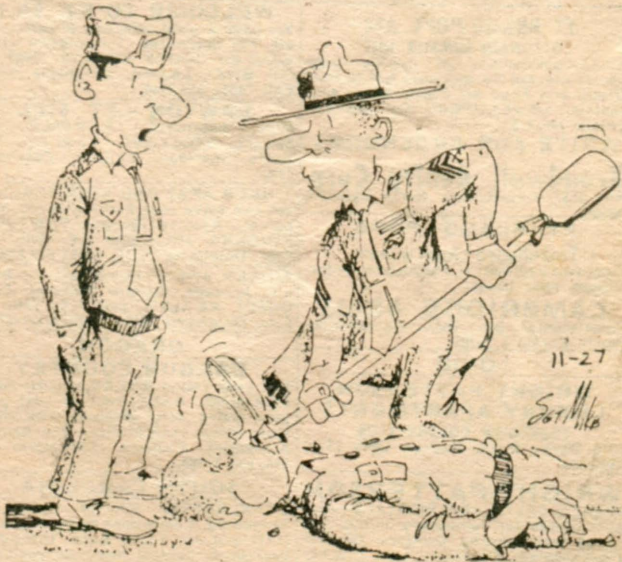
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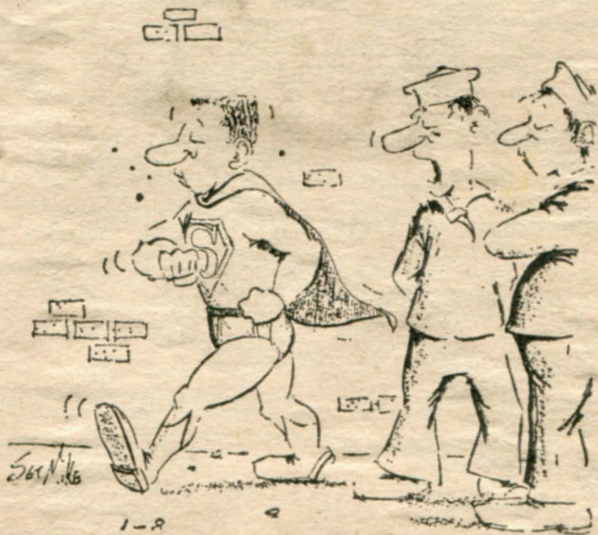
"Say, ya know them B-52's pack quite a jolt..."

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"No kiddin' — an' ya say he wanted t' know what it tasted like??"

With Sgt. Mike



"Ya know-sometimes these Marines do get to me."

With Sgt. Mike



"One more crack about how much fun you had back packin' in th' Boy Scouts an you can hang it up!!"